2/22/72

Dear Paul,

Thanks for the letter from your friend (did you note one of the two letters is the one of which I asked you?) and the surprising clipping about Ramontov. My God! what will the police think of their Russian translator?

I never did any special work on him. I know there are others who had some suspicions. However, I would not assume this article has to mean he has had a change of heart for several reasons. The standard of living has improved in all Communist countries (as you can see on TV today from China). What has not improved, or has very little, is our concept of freedom, and there Ilya says the right things.

In fact, if one were to make out a defense of him, one could argue that saying it is merely boredom that makes the Russians drunk makes him a propagandists, for Russians have always been heavy drinkers. With the Poles, they run a high percentage of drunks.

If you haven't read Khruschev Remembers, it is a pretty thorough indictment of Stalin and others. The Russians called it a fake, but I'm inclined to think it is real. In it you will find tale after tale of Stalin forcing drink upon his companions, making them drunk on purpose. Khruschev avoids mention of his own public drunkenness, esp. in Yugoslavia. I am finding the book fascinating. It is available in a Bantam paperback if you are interested. It is a long book.

What Ilya says of the schools there is true, or was about 10 years ago or a little less, when our government had some ~~Britannica~~ Encyclopaedia Britanica people, as I recall, to make a study then supposed to have been used to goose up our own schools. I remember reading that study. In fact, most of Europe has more intensive education in the lower grades than we do.

It is not only the name your friend produced that suggests a fit. I have a little more checking to do when I can. Finger still limits.

Many thanks and best regards,